

spores, which in other individuals of the family are simple, divided crucially into four distinct spores, precisely as in *Florideæ*. The family then of *Zoospermeæ*, like the two others, exhibits this peculiarity."

The Alga of course belongs to a new genus, and Dr. Montagne has in consequence dedicated it to Mr. G. H. K. Thwaites, who has facilitated the study of Algæ so much by his admirable mode of preparing specimens. M. J. B.—*From a Letter presented to the French Academy*, October 20, 1845.

HASSALL'S 'FRESHWATER ALGÆ.'

To the Editors of the Annals of Natural History.

GENTLEMEN,—I beg to call your attention to an omission in the preface of the 'History of the British Freshwater Algæ,' of which I was not conscious until the work was placed in my hands ready bound, and which I much regret.

In making my acknowledgments to those gentlemen who kindly afforded me assistance in the preparation of the work, I have, most unfortunately and unaccountably, omitted all reference to the respected name of Mr. Dillwyn, one of the earliest and most successful cultivators of a knowledge of the Algæ.

In a future issue of the book I will take care that this error be rectified, and in the meantime I should feel obliged by your insertion of these few lines in explanation of what might seem a strange omission to many, and to Mr. Dillwyn a slight, the commission of which never entered into my thoughts.

I remain, Gentlemen, your very obedient servant,

ARTHUR H. HASSALL.

Norland Villa, Addison Road North, Sept. 10, 1845.

NATURAL HISTORY IN IRELAND.

Among the signs of good times for natural history, one of the most promising is the encouragement given to that science in the University of Dublin, and which contrasts favourably with the apathy, and even opposition shown towards it by Oxford and Cambridge, and the indifference displayed by the senators of the University of London, a body too fondly attached to the traditions of the older universities. In a printed notice of the present state of the natural-history collections in Trinity College, Dublin, now under the charge of one of the first among British zoologists, Mr. Robert Ball, we find that the university professors give courses of lectures, free to the public, on comparative anatomy, botany, mineralogy and geology, besides demonstrations in their respective departments by the keepers of the botanical and zoological collections. When we read the name of Harrison in connexion with comparative anatomy, of Allman and Harvey with botany, of Ball with zoology, and of Apjohn and Oldham with mineralogy and geology, it is very evident that Dublin possesses the only university in the British empire which can boast of a complete school of natural history, conducted by competent professors and *freely open* to all who wish to learn. Honour, then, to the Provost, Fellows and Professors of Trinity College! Their museums, too, are thrown open

at proper times to all who wish to enter,—all members and students of the university having power to admit visitors, and all strangers, without introduction, on entering their names. That the public are not ungrateful for such generous privileges, is evident from the long list of valuable donations recorded in the document which has given rise to these remarks. When a great and learned college thus sets so honourable an example, the spirit of science is sure to diffuse itself far and wide. We find it at work in Ireland among those who are to instruct the poor as well as among the educators of the higher classes. One of the many active naturalists of Belfast, Mr. R. Patterson, has just been delivering a course of lectures on the Invertebrate animals to a class of 200 masters of the national schools—more than all the members of natural-history classes in London collected together! Yet there is no want of either zeal, ability or eloquence on the part of our English professors.

Occurrence of the Belted Kingfisher, Alcedo Alcyon, Linn., in Ireland.

I have the pleasure to record the occurrence of this North American bird in Ireland; a specimen, as I learn by letter from T. W. Warren, Esq. of Dublin, dated Nov. 21, 1845, having been shot by Capt. Smith at Annsbrook, county of Meath, about the first of the present month. It has fortunately been preserved, and on being shown to Mr. R. Ball (from whom also a letter respecting it has been received) was at once identified as *A. Alcyon*. Mr. Warren adds, that when at Mr. Glennon's, the well-known bird-preserved, on the day before the date of his letter, the gamekeeper of Mr. Latouche of Luggela (county of Wicklow) called to mention that he had lately seen a very large kingfisher at a stream connecting two lakes in that neighbourhood. He saw the bird very well, as it admitted of his approach within twenty yards: his description agreeing with the *A. Alcyon*, the specimen was shown to him, which he at once identified as being of the same species as that which he had seen.

This kingfisher—said to be the only species inhabiting North America—is migratory there, and like other birds from the same continent which have visited Ireland and Great Britain, has appeared here about the migratory period. As an American bird it is fully treated of by Wilson*, Audubon† and Richardson‡. The last author states that in summer “it frequents all the large rivers in the fur countries up to the 67th degree of latitude.” It retires to winter in the Southern States and the West India islands (Wilson and Richardson). Audubon remarks that “it is extremely hardy, and those individuals which migrate northward to breed, seldom return towards our Southern States, where they spend the winter, until absolutely forced to do so by the great severity of the weather,” vol. v. p. 548. This is I believe the first notice of the species being met with on the eastern side of the Atlantic.

Belfast, Nov. 22, 1845.

WM. THOMPSON.

* Sir W. Jardine's edit., vol. i. p. 348.

† Orn. Biog. vols. i. and v.

‡ Fauna Bor. Amer. p. 339.